H A R A M B E E

FLAME

Vol. Eleven No. 7

July 1990

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

A QUESTION OF BEAUTY, II

According to Paula Giddings' WHEN AND WHERE I ENTER: THE IMPACT OF BLACK WOMEN ON RACE AND SEX IN AMERICA, Madame C.J. Walker, the hair products tycoon, was America's first African woman millionaire. By 1910, her company was employing about five thousand African women agents around the world and was averaging revenues of about $1,000 a day, seven days a week. Madame Walker introduced to African women, among other things, the hot(straightening) comb and various chemical agents which functioned to straighten the hair. Walker insisted, however, that her products were not either designed to straighten hair or marketed to appeal to African women who desired to have straight hair. She claimed that her products were designed to promote good scalp and hair health. But when one looks at the ads and other promotional material that were used in the marketing of the Walker products and "beauty" shops, one clearly sees that Madame C.J. found African folks' natural hair to be unattractive. That she denied that the straightening of African women's hair was anything more than some kind of accidental/residual effect of the processes which she had developed is equivalent to a manufacturer of a lawn-mower claiming that this device is primarily designed to provide exercise to those who use it and that the fact that lawn-mowers cut grass is some kind of unintended latent function.

The question could be raised: Why is this fool bothering to spend all this time and space on superficialities? That sounds like a valid question until we ask these: Why, during the '60s, were African students in this country being suspended from school for wearing their hair in natural fashion; and why, in the '80s, were there instances of African women being fired from their jobs for wearing their hair in the African braiding tradition? The answer to these questions is that our acceptance of the beauty of our own natural hair is seen by Caucasian authority figures as a rejection on our part of the idea that Caucasians, and Caucasian women in particular, are the standard by which physical

beauty is to be judged. These Caucasian authority figures see such a rejection as threatening. They understand that our arriving to an acceptance of the beauty of our own African features would be an important step in the process of our throwing off the burdensome belief in our own inferiority or would be an ominous(for them) sign of such a process taking place. There is a fundamental principle at work here: People who think of themselves as ugly are more inclined to accept mistreatment than people who think of themselves as beautiful.

In the case, such as with the U.S., where a "racial"(the idea of there being more than one human race being a racist concept itself) group is held in a position of inferiority by a self-proclaimed "superior" group, the job of maintaining the dominated group in its subjugated position is greatly aided by assaults upon the group's collective and individual sense of self-esteem. After a time, these assaults have the effect of so convincing members of the dominated group of their inferiority and their need to become like the "superior" in order to receive some level of validation that members of the dominated group will launch these assaults against themselves.

When EBONY, JET, ESSENCE, and countless other African-owned magazines, newspapers, and other publications run ads, do features on fashion, and otherwise promote an idea of physical beauty by which African people - particularly, women - can not simultaneously be beautiful and have nappy hair, be beautiful and be "too" dark of skin, be beautiful and be "too" broad of nose, etc., these publications are being just as guilty of forcing upon us a Eurocentric standard of beauty as are the Caucasian-owned publications which they so often claim to be alternatives to.

One of the most hideous and extreme examples of the impact this kind of cultural assault can have on a person is Michael Jackson, who, through plastic surgery and other treatments, has become a

(Cont. on page 14)

THOUGHTS ON MANDELA...

Nelson Mandela, Deputy President of the African National Congress(ANC), has concluded his speaking tour in the United States, and there were a number of events that bear highlighting. For many, it was not surprising that there was such abundant support and outpouring of financial contributions for the A.N.C. In New York City, for example, Mr. Mandela raised over 1.5 million dollars. After all pledges nationwide are accounted for, it is estimated that over 10 million dollars will have been received by the A.N.C.

During the townhall meeting with Ted Koppel of "Nightline," there were many polemics and matters of controversy. However, the most notable moment occurred when Mandela posed the question to Koppel of why he accepted his posture of not getting involved in the racial and other domestic issues in the U.S. but could not accept his refusal to involve himself in the internal affairs of Libya and Cuba or to renounce Qaddafi, Castro, or the Palestine Liberation Organization's Yasser Arafat. Koppel seemed stunned and remained in dumbfounded silence for more than five seconds, prompting Mandela to ask the speechless host if he had been paralyzed. After Koppel recovered, he continued hammering away on the issue of the A.N.C. leader's support of the three "enemies." But Mandela was unflinching in his position and steadfastly refused to allow a wedge to be driven between the A.N.C. and those countries and organizations which had been the most supportive of it.

As the camera panned the audience, it was amazing to see the various NEGRO leaders sitting there with mouths agape as they heard Mandela respond with such dignity and self-assurance to questions, many of which were clearly designed to intimidate. They were witnessing a TRUE leader, who was refusing to acquiesce to bribes or intimidation from conservative racists or Zionists.

The U.S. Congress, which is packed full of conserv-

ative racists, has offered a ten-million-dollar carrot to the ANC to renounce the use of violence in its struggle against minority rule in South Africa. Yet, when one looks at the other white/ right-wing-supported "freedom fighters," one sees no such congressional objections to the use of violence. This reflects a racist and disjointed foreign policy. When people of color are fighting each other, aid is plentiful. When whites are perceived to be on the losing sides, aid is coupled to non-violent tactics.

Consider the following: 1. The Afghan resistance movement(Mujahideeen) were able to acquire millions of U.S. tax dollars and sophisticated anti-aircraft Stinger missiles without renouncing violence. It is difficult to be non-violent with a Stinger in one's possession. 2. The Contras, who were seeking for eleven years to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, were never asked to use non-violence in their struggle. 3. The millions of dollars doled out to Jonas Savimbi, the rebel leader of UNITA, has never been tied to any UNITA pledge of non-violence as that group attempts to overthrow the government of Angola. 4. The State of Israel receives over $3 billion of grants and has one of the worst human rights records related to its treatment of Palestinians.

African-Americans are expected to endorse a philosophy of non-violence. Meanwhile, oppressive conditions dictate that the only language commonly understood by the oppressors is that of violence.

In spite of the many years of non-violence practiced by the A.N.C., the South African apartheid government responded consistently with violence. When the A.N.C. moved to the armed struggle, the apartheid government started to make concessions. One cannot talk peace to barbarians and thick-head apartheid supporters.

The U.S. government demonstrates a lot of audacity to ask liberation movements to use non-violence

(Cont. on page 10)

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization (parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. We are <u>not</u> looking for poems which sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Ghana Brings Traditions Into Politics

"...the government of Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings has given power to traditional rulers and widened the base of grassroots participation.

"Under the PNDC law 207, traditional rulers are to be consulted by government in the appointment of one-third of the membership of district-assemblies. This role of the chiefs had been largely taken away since the National Liberation Council that overthrew Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and the Progress Party of Dr. Kofi Busia came into power. What Lt. Rawlings has done is to go back to the basics of African political systems.

-from "Africa Sings The New Tune," which appears on page 10 of the June 22 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, ILL)

South Africa & Zimbabwe: Regrettable Parallels

"The white minority in South Africa makes up just 15 percent of the population, but they own 87 percent of the land...

"In 1979-80 an agreement worked out under British and U.S. guidance replaced the white minority government of Ian Smith and set up the black-led government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabawe(formerly, Rhodesia). Before the agreement, 50 percent of the farmland in the country--the most productive land--was preserved for whites. Zimbabwe's new constitution protected white-owned land from any seizure. The only way that land could pass from white into black hands was for the whites to willingly sell. At the same time, about 800,000 black peasant families(80 percent of the population) depended on farming to make a living and were crammed into the 42 percent of the land reserved as 'communal' lands...

"In the ten years since the 1979-80 agreement, this basic situation in Zimbabwe has not changed... About 4,200 commercial farmers--almost all of them white--still own at least 50 percent of the productive land. Black commercial farmers own only about 3.5 percent...Overall the whites control 80 percent of the gross domestic product in Zimbabwe.

"...The Mugabe government promised to resettle peasant families on underused public land or land bought from whites. But only a small portion of the land is occupied by resettled peasants. Many peasants on communal lands are forced to move into rapidly growing squatter camps. One in twelve Zimbabweans today is a squatter. Often the squatters are evicted when a white land-owner reclaims or buys up the land they occupy."

-from "The Case of Zimbabwe," which appears on page 4 of the June 24 REVOLUTIONARY WORKER (Chicago, ILL)

Nigeria To Produce Own Autos

"The hope that a fully Nigerian-built car might come to reality in the nearest future has been rekindled with the production by an indigenous engineering company of the country's first auto-engine using local resources.

"Addis Engineering Company Limited, which performed this feat, is already working fervently towards a four-wheel vehicle expected to be commissioned later in the year.

"According to Mr Olayemi Olowu, the company's managing director, the engine with a capacity of 200cc was designed and fabricated with aluminum, including scrap metal, aided by a metal analyser...

"For over three years now, Addis has been engaged in the low-cost vehicle project along with three other institutions, financed by the ministry of in-

dustry..."

-from "Nigeria Produces First Auto Engine," which appears on page 19 of the June 7-13 NIGERIA HOMENEWS(London, England)

Case Of Former Panther On Death Row Receiving International Attention

"In the past two weeks, rallies and demonstrations in New York, Paris, Berlin, Hamburg, Toronto and London have brought together hundreds of socialists, trade unionists, black activists, anti-apartheid militants and opponents of the racist death penalty to save the life of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal...

"For 20 years--from his days as a 14-year-old Black Panther Party spokesman in 1968 and his well-known support of MOVE as a prominent journalist--Jamal has been the target of Philadelphia's trigger-happy cops. Known to many as the 'voice of the voiceless' for his defense of the poor and oppressed minorities, Jamal was framed in 1982 on charges of killing a Philly cop. Today, his name is becoming the rallying cry against the racist death penalty...

"The protests, kicked off with a rally of 150 people in New York on June 28, illustrated the growing support of the labor movement in the fight to save Jamal..."

-from "Rallies Demand: Save Mumia Abu-Jamal," which appears on pages 16 and 15 of the July 13 WORKERS VANGUARD(N.Y., N.Y.)

"Anti-Crime" Legislation: Ominous Signs

"As senators returned from their Independence Day recess they were expected to pass an omnibus

anti-crime bill that contains many provisions alarming to civil libertarians...

"For civil rights groups the Senate's most disappointing action was the removal from the omnibus bill of the proposed Racial Justice Act by a vote of 58-38. This provision would have prohibited imposing the death penalty in a racially discriminatory pattern. It would have enable low-income defendants charged with capital crimes to have counsel appointed and investigators and experts' fees paid to develop claims of a racially discriminatory pattern of death sentences...

"Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., plans to introduce a version of the Racial Justice Act as the House begins work on its anti-crime bill later this month.

"Also waiting in the wings for House consideration is the National Drug and Crime Emergency Act. Authored by House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich of Georgia and Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, the plan would allow the president to enact a series of 'anti-crime' measures by declaring a drug and crime emergency.

"During the 5-year 'emergency' period, the Gramm-Gingrich plan would expand federal prison space, require prisoners to work and establish mandatory minimum prison sentences without release for some offenses...

"In addition, during the period of the 'National Drug and Crime Emergency': -Prisoners could be housed in temporary facilities, including tents, and military bases and other federal facilities could be used as temporary prisons; -Federal courts would be limited in their ability to cap population levels in state prisons. Judges could only do so when it could be proven that overcrowding had imposed cruel and unusual punishment on a specific prisoner and that no other remedy existed. Relief would extend only to that individual and not to other prisoners...

(Cont. on page 10)

when violence is such an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. The recent invasion of Panama to arrest General Noriega was not a peaceful excursion. If we believe this, then how can we account for the hundreds of civilians killed by U.S. forces.

The moral of this story is that white folks dole out Nobel Peace Prizes and non-violent trickery for people of color. Yet, when THEY want action, it is quick, violent, and grand. H. Rap Brown once said that violence is as American as apple pie. And if we continue to allow those with the pie to dictate our strategies for struggle, then we will never acquire our fair share. Mandela is correct. To meet a violent government with non-violence is suicide when one considers the context of South Africa's apartheid.

-Montsho Rakeletso

M. Rakeletso is an African social activist living in Omaha.

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-from "Congress Goes After Crime With A Big Stick," which appears on page 9 of the July 18 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.)

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POETRY/STORY/GRAPHICS

BANKIN'

We the too jive fools
we down with rappin
make you shake yo onion an be finger-snappin
we got gold
hangin round our necks
Africa medallions on our chests
but we not into Africa
don't be misled
the gold tips you off as to what's in our heads
makin bank
that's what we about
just check out our raps
they will leave no doubt
we not tryin to be
no Malcolm X
don't nothin sell records like SEX!
we talkin bout the wild thang
call it what you will
but bein nasty as we wanna be is payin our bills
some say we dissin the sisters
well that's the way it goes
they aint nothin to us but some bitches an hos
the white man
he rules this land
he say we niggers---you understand
it aint nothin to us
that's the way it be
besides
we would rather be rich
than be free
We the too jive fools
we got the ignorance beat
stay in the dark but get out of yo seats
we cain't give you light
but we can give you heat
we jive
too jive
jive
too jive...

-Mondo

1st AMENDMENT: NOT FOR AFRICANS

I was watching "Donahue" last Thursday and "Geraldo" this morning; and, on both shows, the topic had to do with Two Live Crew. I see it as strange that, while we African people in this country are fighting each other over money, property, and colors, there should be so much attention paid to questions of what people say. The First Amendment, which is supposed to be for all the people, does not apply to African-Americans. The courts in this savage country are trying to tell us that we must be careful about what we say. The Florida court ruling declaring "Nasty As We Wanna Be" to be obscene should open up our eyes to see and realize that we have no rights whatsoever with regard to freedom of speech.

Brothers and Sister, if we don't wake up and smell the coffee, the violations of rights that we fought against in the fifties and sixties will reappear so fast, we may be able to do nothing about them and will find ourselves in the same situation as that of our parents and grandparents, who had to shed their blood to gain what we think we have. Like them, we will have no right to express ourselves.

Apparently, Two Live Crew have no right to express themselves. But savages in this country such as Andrew Dice Clay and Guns And Roses have the right to get on radio or television and talk about "niggers" and "coons" and so forth. We must wake up before it's too late.

-Tony Haggan

Tony Haggan is the Akowe(Secretary) of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization at the Nebraska State Prison in Lincoln.

BACK IN TIME

Sometime in 1626 in a Dutch outpost called New Amsterdam, now New York City, eleven Africans were imported and assigned quarters on the fringe of what is now the Bowery. Those black laborers eventually built a wagon road to a place in the upper part of the settlement that the Dutch called "Haarlem." About 274 years passed before Harlem (now spelled with one "a") was changed into a black metropolis.

Eighteen years after their arrival the eleven Africans petitioned the Dutch authorities with the support of the rank-and-file colonists and were finally granted their freedom. The liberated men, who now had wives, settled in a swamp known today as Greenwich Village. They built this swamp into a prosperous community and attracted other settlers.

The peaceful relations between Africans and the white settlers came to an end when the British gained control of New Amsterdam in 1664 and introduced chattel slavery.

In 1741 an African named Caesar led the first slave uprising in New York and in 1799, more than a half century before Lincoln's proclamation, a bill was passed in New York beginning the gradual emancipation of slaves...

The first independent act of these slaves after the end of slavery in the North was to break away from the Methodist Episcopal Church and start the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. After the Civil War these former slaves moved further uptown in the settlement that was going to be New York City..."

Source: BLACK MANIFESTO FOR EDUCATION, edited by Jim Haskins; pages 28 and 29

veritable Frankenstein's monster, a creation of the music industry and his own damaged psyche. But in this society, as in most others, it is women who are subject to the most pressure to be or become beautiful. And, of course, this question of physical beauty is not one that occurs in a vacuum. It is a component of the mating game. A woman is urged to pretty herself up in order that she can attract a man. Related to this is the matter of "dressing(as well as applying make-up and styling the hair) for success" in which the man is an employer and "mating" is getting a job or moving up some corporate ladder. And, generally speaking, the employer to whom the woman is to make herself acceptable is going to be a male Caucasian.

Receiving the constant message from both the Caucasian-run and African-run media that characteristic African features are unattractive, African women seek to approximate the looks of those Sisters whom media have approved as being pretty, sexy, etc. They are helped along in this effort by a wide array of hair-straighteners, skin-"care" powders and cremes, plastic surgery, etc. But it is not only our Sisters who accept this idea of some kind of natural African inadequacy in matters of looks. Brothers accept it too, and many of us damned near break our legs trying to catch those African women who have the media-approved looks or/and those who are the "real thing"--Caucasian women. In the meantime, those African women who have the most characteristically African features often find themselves either unwanted or treated by African men as if they are being done a favor when these men show them some attention.

We, African people generally and African magazine and newspaper publishers in particular, must do what we can to create a climate in which all of us - especially, our women - can be appreciative of our own natural beauty. More specifically, African-owned magazines and newspapers must begin to insure that the ads and features they run reflect the wide range of looks that African people have

and not act, in their ads and features, as if Sisters with dark skin do not exist. They must make it a point of featuring Sisters wearing their hair in natural fashion or in braids and refuse to run ads for hair-straighteners, jheri curls, and any other products designed to de-Africanize our people.

The above are just a few of the steps African-owned publications can take to help bring about a sense of self-esteem among African people. We need to be appreciative of our own beauty and need all the help we can get in counteracting the Caucasian-run media's racist assaults against our sense of self(individual and collective). And while African publishers have an obvious interest in making money, we have an obvious interest in demanding that their publications truly function for our benefit.

-Editor

Photo from Nov. '89 NOMMO of Judith Jamison, former principle dancer of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First national Conference On Networking For Success

"A wide array of critical issues such as marketing and distribution that affect publishers of color will be addressed during the first annual national conference on 'Networking for Success' to be held Oct 19-21 at the Inn on the Park hotel in Madison, Wisconsin.

"The conference which is the leading national forum for independent African, Asian, Hispanic and Native American book publishers is sponsored by the Minority Publishers Exchange, a national network headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin...

"...the goal of the conference is to assist small publishers, authors and writers get their books published and distributed by providing a national forum to improve networking and work directly with national book distributors. For more information on the conference or to register, call the Minority Publisher Exchange at (608)244-5633 or write MPE, P.O. Box 9869, Madison WI, 53715."

Yoruba Priest Convention

August 3 and 4, 1990 at Malcolm X College(1900 W. Van Buren; Chicago, Illinois). There will be workshops, rituals, ceremonies for Afrikan and Afrikan-American priests, supporters, builders, restorers...Discover traditional techniques for contending with contemporary society. For more information, contact the Songo Temple of Chicago at P.O. Box 491, Maywood, ILL, 60153. Or call (708)681-3518.

Afrikan Woman: The Original Guardian Angel

"A collection of writings on the Black Woman's creation of and on-going contribution to world civilization..." by Dr. Ishakamusa Barashango. IV Dynasty Publ. Co.

RECOGNITION

Even though the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization understands that the Establishment school system is designed to keep African students in this country ignorant of their African history, cultures and value systems and functions to make of them Caucasians in brown skin, we also realize that it is important for Sisters and Brothers to get from the school system knowledge of math and the other physical sciences, to gain proficiency with computers, to develop their communications skills, etc. It is because of this realization and also because we wish to encourage initiative that we recognize the following African men who recently acquired either g.e.d.s or associate degrees from the State Prison campus of Southeast Community College.

*Sylvester Jones	*Edward C. Greer
*Calvin L. Freeman	Billy Billups
*Duane Sanders	*LaRon Burnett
Melvin Clark	Jerry Irving, Jr.
Donald Hayes	Marvel Jones
Cameron Mitchell	Renard Alston, Jr.

We express the hope that these men will continue pursuing knowledge and understanding and urge them to take advantage of the prison library(and the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization library, in the case of our members) to learn those things about themselves and their people which which they are not likely to find out about in school.

*Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org. members